

SENATOR NEWELL: Mr. President, members of the body, I am offering this amendment. I really hate to do this considering the tortured existence of this bill. Now I want to say this that I would prefer to have public defenders added in since county attorneys are added in and I have a list of letters from the public defenders across the state who argue that they can pay for them out of their budgets but they at least ought to have parity with the county attorneys. Now knowing the conservative mood of this body, I might have been wiser trying to take the county attorneys out, but instead I would like to add the eight, or let me see how many there are exactly, about thirteen or fourteen county public defenders into the statute books and create parity. Now I would hope that this would be considered seriously, it ought to be considered in terms of its merits. We are asking, Mr. President, I would sure like to be listened to if I could. Could you help me a little.

PRESIDENT: We all desire that but you want me to try to get more attention.

SENATOR NEWELL: Maybe ask Mr. Barrette to leave the floor. That would help a little.

PRESIDENT: Who?

SENATOR NEWELL: Mr. Barrette.

PRESIDENT: Is he being disruptive?

SENATOR NEWELL: Well, it is pretty noisy over here in this corner. I can't even hear myself.

PRESIDENT: Well, Senator DeCamp is over there, too, and Senator Keyes. That is the source of the trouble. John Barrette has a strong reputation but he can't compete with those two. We should have more order on the floor because Senator Newell has got an important point here.

SENATOR NEWELL: I was hoping to, you know, I really don't want this taken as a joke and this bill, I think we have spent far too much time on this bill. But the issue before us today ought to be a question of parity. Now we are asking law enforcement people, we are asking our system of justice in the State of Nebraska to protect the rights of Nebraskans. We are asking them also to protect the rights as prosecutors and I think we have the same right to ask the public defenders have the same privileges and the same advantages and the same opportunities. That is all I am saying. If this, and I would ask the body to pay attention to this, if this fails, if we fail to add the public defenders, which is approximately thirteen public defenders from across the state, then I would ask the body to then withdraw the 92 or 93 county attorneys. Now that can save a lot of money, folks, but all I ask for is parity. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Bereuter. Is that a 100% of parity, Senator Newell?

SENATOR NEWELL: Or close to it.

PRESIDENT: All right. Senator Bereuter.